DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 110 257 RC 008 706

AUTHOR Jones, Dorothy M.
TITLE The Urban Native Encounters the Social Service System.
INSTITUTION Alaska Univ., Fairbanks. Inst. of Social, Economic, and Government Research.
PUB DATE 74
NOTE 73p.
AVAILABLE FROM Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701 ($3.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$3.32 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Accountability; *American Indians; Anglo Americans; Credibility; Cultural Awareness; *Eskimos; *Evaluation; Financial Support; Interagency Planning; Negative Reinforcement; *Organization; Power Structure; *Social Services; Social Welfare; Urban Population
IDENTIFIERS Alaska; *Alaska Natives; Anchorage

ABSTRACT

Twenty-seven social service agencies in Anchorage, Alaska were examined for purposes of determining the: (1) organizational structure of Anchorage social service systems, (2) impact of agency structures on Alaska Native clients, and (3) extent to which agency organizational structures reflect the interests and values of bureaucrats and professionals. Thirty-three administrators, 46 staff members, and 50 clients from agencies most closely associated with Alaska Natives were interviewed. In addition, four community planning groups were studied. The Anchorage social service system was found to have destructive consequences for its clients due to: (1) fragmented services, (2) underfunded services, (3) irresponsible referral practices, (4) lack of knowledge about Natives, (5) lack of expectations for evaluating agency effectiveness, and (6) ritualization of interagency planning. Among the sample clients, it was found that one-third had had beneficial agency experiences (those least dependent on the agencies); one-third could not be clearly categorized in terms of agency outcomes; and one-third had had destructive agency experiences (those most dependent on the agencies). Moreover, it was found that agencies were organized in ways that promoted and protected white interests. It was proposed that Native organizations be given the financial resources to operate social service systems for Natives. (JC)

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The Urban Native Encounters the Social Service System

by

Dorothy M. Jones

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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RC 008706

$3.00

Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research

University of Alaska

Fairbanks, Alaska
99701

Standard Book Number: 88353-019-8
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 74-620178
ISEGR Report Series Number: 42

Published by
Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
1974

Printed in the United States of America

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PREFACE

The migration of Alaska Natives from rural to urban areas is a fairly recent phenomenon. The change entails a severe uprooting for these migrants, rendering them more dependent on social services than any other group in the state. This report examines the responses of the Anchorage social service system to problems their Native clients face; it defines for policymakers the characteristics of the social service system that operate to harm rather than help a substantial portion of urban Native clients.

Dr. Dorothy M. Jones, a sociologist at the University of Alaska's Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research (ISEGR), has for several years been studying urban Native migrants and the problems they face in adapting to urban living. In this report, the author recommends changes in the present system of providing social services to make it more responsive to their particular needs.

The Institute and the author wish to express their appreciation for the valuable help of many individuals. Jane Reed and Nettie Peratrovich provided invaluable research assistance. Helpful comments on preliminary drafts were provided by Scott Briar, dean of the School of Social Work, University of Washington; anthropologist Julie Cruikshank; political analyst Richard Fineberg; Dick Gilbert, former head of Alaska Children's Services; political scientist Gordon Harrison; Thomas Morehouse, professor of sociology, University of Alaska; Barbara Nachman, psychologist at the Indian Health Service Area Mental Health

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Hospital in Anchorage; Mary Lee Nicholson, associate professor of sociology at the University of Alaska, Anchorage; Frances Fox Piven, professor of sociology at Columbia University; and John Richardson, assistant professor of sociology, Western Washington State College. The author is especially grateful to her constant and most loving critics, Lillian Rubin, professor of sociology, Wright Institute, University of California, Berkeley, and her husband Bob Jones, refuge manager, Izembeck National Wildlife Refuge, Aleutian Islands. Finally, this study would not have been possible without the close cooperation of clients and staff of many social service organizations in Anchorage to whom the author also extends special thanks.

The study was funded under the Community Service and Continuing Education program, Title I, Higher Education Act of 1965. Peggy Raybeck had responsibility for editing and preparing the manuscript for publication with the assistance of Susan Daniels.

October 1974

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In long-term research on urban Native migrants (Aleuts, Indians, Eskimos) in Anchorage, I found that the social service system is one of the major institutions influencing their adaptations to the urban setting. I decided to focus my study for a while on the impact of Anchorage social services on urban Natives. As I found that a considerable number of Natives were damaged by their experiences with social agencies, I decided to examine the characteristics of the social service system that lead to such negative outcomes and the reasons that such characteristics exist and persist.

Anchorage Natives are usually recent arrivals (within the past decade) facing several stressful transitions simultaneously: from rural to urban, from one culture to another, and from one set of class and racial definitions to another as they learn that poverty and minority racial status are stigmatized in the white-dominated urban setting far more than in the villages. The urban transition of Natives is accompanied by serious social problems—poverty, unemployment, underemployment, family disorganization, alcoholism, and other emotional disorders.

Anchorage social services purport to solve just such problems as these; they aim to rehabilitate Natives and to facilitate their entry into the mainstream of society. Rehabilitation, independence, integration—these are the banners of social agencies. That social agencies in Anchorage, as well as else-

where, fail to achieve such ambitious goals is common knowledge. But the issue is not just a question of failure to rehabilitate and integrate urban Natives; the issue is that the very agencies that are supposed to rehabilitate and integrate instead promote psychologically and socially deviant adaptations among a significant proportion of clients. One-third of the clients in my sample experienced such destructive outcomes in their interactions with agencies; another third perceived their agency experiences as beneficial; the final third was too new to the system to be classified in terms of outcomes. If we divide the unclassified evenly between the other two categories, then approximately half of the clients in my sample would have been damaged by their experiences with agencies. That is a tremendous proportion of clients to be harmed by a system set up precisely to improve their circumstances.

Social scientists often explain such irrational outcomes in terms of hidden goals or latent functions of a social system. Piven and Cloward analyze the relief system in terms of benefits to the society at large; they identify two hidden goals of the relief system: (1) regulation of marginal labor and (2) containment of civil disorder.[1] Gans lists 15 ways that poverty benefits nonpoor groups, including benefits that accrue to those who administer and deliver social services.[2] Following these lines, I focused on how (and if) the behavior of Anchorage social agency administrators and staff contributes to the irrationality of the social service system. I considered how their organizational environments and psychological adaptations influence the social service system.

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[1] Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* (New York: Random House, Pantheon Books, 1971), p. xiii.

[2] Herbert J. Gans, "The Uses of Poverty: The Poor Pay All," *Annual Editions in Social Problems '73-'74* (Guilford, Connecticut: The Dushkin Publishing Company, 1974).

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I found that social work administrators and professionals face a profound dilemma. Generally they are dedicated persons attracted to their field because of a commitment to helping others. They face many constraints to achieving their helping goals such as restrictive regulations, excessive demands for paper work, inadequate funding, and federal requirements to engage in detective-like investigations of welfare recipients. Their resolution of this dilemma hinges on how much they value their jobs. Most place a high value on their jobs because of relatively high salaries, prestige and opportunities to enact professional roles and build careers. Valuing jobs that constrain their helping goals is the bedrock of their dilemma.

The way in which bureaucrats and professionals resolve this dilemma profoundly affects and helps to explain the social service system's organization, functioning, and impact on clients. I shall weave these three themes throughout the paper:

- The way in which the Anchorage social service system is organized.
- The way in which these organizational structures reflect the interests and values of bureaucrats and professionals.
- The impact of agency structures and practices on Native clients.

My paper is organized into three parts. The first is a brief sketch of urban Natives' characteristics and current life situation. The second deals with the characteristics of the social service system that have the most destructive consequences for Native clients: fragmentation of services and its consequences for funding and referral practices, the lack of a knowledge base and its consequences for evaluation practices and worker-client relationships, and the ineptness of social service planning and its

consequences for innovation. The concluding section offers a proposal for a redistribution of social service resources for Native clients to Native organizations.

The social service system probably affects most client groups similarly. I have focused on a particular client group, the urban Native, because of my long-term interest in that group. But this focus has another advantage. Since most social agencies deal primarily with culturally and subculturally different groups, focusing on a particular cultural minority tends to dramatize the functioning of the system.

My approach is outlined in detail in the appendix. Here I want to mention only the general features of the approach. First I want to state that analyzing a highly complex system of social agencies, their administrators, staff, and clients requires broad generalizations that may conceal variability and heterogeneity among agencies and individuals. I considered the possibility of pointing out the variations, but this would have entailed qualifying nearly every statement in the text. Instead I decided to try to capture the central tendencies of the social service system at the cost of identifying exceptions. This decision, however, poses problems for me; for example, when I condemn agencies for abuses against clients, I am keenly aware that the minority of dedicated agency personnel who fought against the most difficult odds to help clients were not receiving the credit due them. I wish here to commend their efforts.

I view social services defined broadly[3] in Anchorage as a system with interacting and interdependent parts. Agencies depend on one another for exchanging resources, planning, and

[3]By broadly defined, I mean a wide range of social programs delivered by many different kinds of employees, as opposed to social services delivered by employees known professionally as "social workers."

coordinating services; and they resist one another when they feel threatened by encroachments on their jurisdictions. They develop systematic means, both formal and informal, for managing and controlling interagency relations.

I examined 25 social service agencies whose clientele is at least 15 percent Native plus two others that play an important role in the social service system (see table). These 27 agencies provide services in mental health, financial assistance, manpower and training, housing, and social services (defined narrowly). I and my research assistants[4] interviewed 33 administrators, 46 staff members, and 50 clients in these agencies, concentrating the interviews in agencies which have the most significant impact on Native clients. In addition, I studied four community planning groups in which the sample agencies participated.

[4]Two research assistants worked on this project at different periods: Jane Reed and Nettie Peratrovich.

SOCIAL AGENCY SAMPLE: AGENCIES UNDER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC AUSPICES, ADMINISTERING AGENCIES, AND PERCENT OF CLIENTS WHO ARE ANCHORAGE NATIVES

Agencies	Administering Agencies	Percent of Clients Who Are Anchorage Natives*
Public Agencies		
Manpower Center	U.S. Department of Labor	8
Project Hire	U.S. Department of Defense	100
Bureau of Apprentice and Training	Alaska Department of Labor	16
Work Incentive Program	U.S. Department of Labor	20
Public Employment Program	Alaska Department of Labor	20
Public Employment Program	Anchorage Borough	15
Public Service Careers	Alaska Department of Labor	22
Jobs Option	Alaska Department of Labor	23
Apprentice Outreach	U.S. Department of Labor	25
Career Education	Anchorage Community College	20
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	Alaska Department of Education	20
Indian Health Services Psychiatric and Social Services	U.S. Public Health Service	100
Bureau of Indian Affairs Social Services and Employment Assistance	U.S. Department of Interior	100
Division of Family and Children's Services	Alaska Department of Health & Social Services	57
Greater Anchorage Area Community Action Program	U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity	33
Alaska Psychiatric Institute	Alaska Department of Health & Social Services	17
Alaska State Housing Authority	Self	33
Anchorage Borough Health Department	Anchorage Borough	4
Social Development Center (Alcoholic facility)	Self	65

(Continued)

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SOCIAL AGENCY SAMPLE (*Continued*)

Agencies	Administering Agencies	Percent of Clients Who Are Anchorage Natives*
Private Agencies Publicly Funded		
Alaska Native Brotherhood Halfway House	Self	100
Anchorage Urban Native Center	Self	100
Christian Methodist Episcopal Drop-in Center	Self	50
Aleut League Rehabilitation Program	Self	100
Private Agencies Privately Funded		
Catholic Charities	Self	60
Friends in Service to Humanity	Self	50
Salvation Army	Self	58
Rescue Mission	Self	50

*Source of estimates for percent of clients who are Anchorage Natives is agency administrators.

CHAPTER 2

CHARACTERISTICS OF URBAN NATIVE MIGRANTS

As mentioned earlier, Anchorage Natives are recent migrants. In 1959, only 659 Natives lived in Anchorage. By 1960 the number had risen to 2,107. And by 1973, the Anchorage Native population had jumped to 9,000, representing nearly a thirteenfold increase since 1950 and more than a fourfold increase since 1960.[5]

The Anchorage Native population, reflecting the composition of the state, comprises northern Eskimos (Innuit), southern Eskimos (Yuit), Athabascans (primarily from Alaska's northern Interior), and south coast Indians (Tlingit, Tsimtsians, and Haida), as well as a few Indians from other parts of the U.S. In both the state and in Anchorage, the Eskimo group is the largest and the Aleut group, the smallest. There are many differences between these Alaska Native culture groups, especially between Indians and Eskimo-Aleuts (Eskimos and Aleuts have common origins), but in this paper, I am concerned with the more commonly shared circumstances and characteristics of their contemporary life situations.

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[5]George W. Rogers, *Alaska Native Population Trends and Vital Statistics* (University of Alaska: Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, 1971), p. 5. The 1973 estimate of the Anchorage Native population is based on the Anchorage Bureau of Indian Affairs Native enrollment figure: John Hope, BIA enrollment officer, personal communication, December 1973.

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There are no Native ethnic enclaves in Anchorage. Natives live geographically dispersed throughout the borough. Furthermore, they usually lack means of transportation for visiting friends and relatives in other parts of the borough. Anchorage has a limited public transportation system and most Natives do not own automobiles. Consequently, Natives tend to live isolated from one another.

Because Anchorage Natives are recent migrants and live geographically dispersed, their urban ethnic institutions are in a very early state of development. An important example of this recent development is the Native regional organizations. But with the recent gains in money and land from the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the regional organizations have been preoccupied with legal and economic issues and the necessity to establish themselves as corporations, and have had only limited time and energy to address social and cultural activities. There is one exception in Anchorage. The Cook Inlet Native Association operates an urban Native center which features an arts and crafts shop, recreational facilities, and several social services. The urban Native center, however, has not been able to reach a substantial proportion of Natives because it is located in an outlying area and has been plagued with continual funding problems.

Churches are another potential source of ethnic institutions, but although Natives belong to many churches, there are few predominantly Native churches in Anchorage. The chief exception, the Russian Orthodox church, is located a considerable distance from the center of town. The lobby of the Indian Health Service hospital serves as an informal social center for some Natives who often go there just to see who in the lobby they may know. The ethnic institution that appears to reach the largest number of Anchorage Natives is the Fourth Avenue strip of bars. Whether or not driven by the urge to drink, Natives are

generally assured of fellowship and mutual aid on Fourth Avenue, and a significant subculture has grown up around it.

Natives' isolation from one another and the dearth of developed ethnic institutions have at least three far-reaching effects on their urban adjustment. One effect is the loss of social controls to which village Natives were accustomed. Even though the social control system is breaking down in some Native villages, in many other, the family, peer group, respected elders, and in some instances, formal authority still furnish guidelines for behavior and apply negative sanctions for deviations from these standards. These controls are largely lost in the urban setting such as Anchorage where the immediate family is usually the only source of control and where control by the immediate family may be irrelevant for youth growing up. For example, a Native father recently migrated to Anchorage may be trying to teach his son appropriate attitudes for survival as a reindeer herder while the son is grappling with threatened school failure or exclusion by the dominant white peer group in his school.

Isolation from Natives and Native institutions also produces a loss of role function for some men and women. The more acculturated and better trained men often feel more successful as breadwinners in the city where job opportunities are better than in the village. But others, especially low skilled workers, often feel they are failures as breadwinners even though they may be earning more cash than they did in the village. This occurs for three reasons. First, whereas poverty was generally commonplace and accepted in the village, it is stigmatized in the urban setting, making many Natives feel degraded and incompetent. Second, breadwinning in the village was not necessarily the sole responsibility of the male family head; it might have been shared by the extended family, so that a man was not judged by what he alone provided the family. Third,

breadwinning in the village was not solely dependent on cash; many villages still place considerable reliance on subsistence production. Therefore, even with less cash, the male may have been better able to provide for his family in the village than in the city. In addition to his role as family breadwinner, a man could win respect and honor in the village by exhibiting his skill as a hunter and by sharing the products of the hunt with fellow villagers. This role is closed to Native men in the city.

Some urban Native women express a strong sense of loss about their former roles as participants in village mutual aid practices. As an Aleut woman said when complaining about her loneliness and depression in the city:

> If I were at home now, I could be taking care of my sister's children while she is sick, and helping to paint the church for Easter.

In a study of Plains Indians in San Francisco, Hanson found that nearly 50 percent of the women who had remained there for at least 1 year wanted to return home. He attributes this dissatisfaction to their loss of roles in the extended family system.[6]

A third result of Natives' isolation from each other and the dearth of developed urban Native institutions is the loss of social supports. Frequently, the Anchorage Native has no one to turn to when he is lonely or in need of housing, food, money, or advice about how to manage the many baffling aspects of city living. One of the most perplexing problems he faces is the need to learn new forms of interpersonal relationship. Village Natives were accustomed to dealing only with known people in known situations; in the impersonal environment of the city,

[6]Marshall Roy Hanson, "Plains Indians and Urbanization," (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1960), p. 58.

they must learn to cope with many strange persons in strange situations. They must learn to understand roles for which there were no models in the village. The interpersonal cues and standards that stood them in good stead in the village do not work in the city.[7]

The technical aspects of city living also pose pervasive problems, more so for Alaska Natives than for non-Native rural migrants to the city because most Natives come from remote villages where there may be no roads, automobiles, telephones, running water, electricity, places of commercial entertainment, banks, and where the only shopping they did was by credit most of the year in the one little grocery store. A Native migrant from such a village must learn how to cross streets; respond to traffic signals, use buses, taxis, telephones, and electric appliances; manage checking accounts; pay monthly bills; and select from many items in large urban stores. To face such massive learning tasks with minimal social supports produces severe stress in the Native migrant.

However pressing these problems, Natives find others more distressing. Natives have higher rates of unemployment, underemployment, and poverty than any other group in Anchorage.[8] The 1970 Census reported:

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[7]See Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York: The Free Press, 1966), pp. 43-75 for an insightful discussion of this condition in modernizing societies.

[8]Most investigators of urban Indians report similarly low economic positions. See, for example, Richard G. Woods and Arthur M. Harkins, *A Review of Recent Research on Minneapolis Indians 1968-1969* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1969); Arthur M. Harkins and Richard G. Woods, *Indian Americans in St. Paul: An Interim Report* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1970); and William H. Hodge, *The Albuquerque Navajos* (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1969).

- The unemployment rate for Anchorage Native men is 1.6 times higher than that for white men and twice as high as that for black men.

- The proportion of Native men who worked 26 weeks or less in 1969 was two and a half times higher than that for white men and three times higher than that for black men.

- The proportion of Natives with incomes below the poverty line is nearly three times higher than that for whites and twice as high as that for blacks.

- The proportion of Native families receiving public assistance is seven times higher than that for whites and four times higher than that for blacks.[9]

The difference between the economic positions of Natives and other groups is probably even greater if we consider that the census undoubtedly missed a considerable number of Natives who live on the street or wander.

White laymen and social scientists often explain Indians' and Alaska Natives' low economic positions in terms of their cultural dispositions. Clearly, behavior is very much a product of culture, but this recognition does not indicate the speed with which people can alter cultural habits under changed circumstances. In a restudy of the Manus of New Guinea after World War II, Mead found that these people had made a rapid adjustment to Western institutions, travelling thousands of years in a generation. Chance saw a similarly rapid adjustment in his study

[9]U.S. Department of Labor, Manpower Administration, *Summary Manpower Indicators for Anchorage* (San Francisco: Data Systems and Reports, Region IX, 1972.), tables 6, 8, 11, and 12.

of Barter Island, Alaska Eskimos. Both investigators attribute this rapid and successful adjustment to Western institutions, in part, to the peoples' disposition to change.[10]

Certainly, urban Native migrants demonstrate a strong disposition to change. Their initial moves to the city reflect precisely a strong desire to enter the economic mainstream. That many remain marginal to it is due as much or more to the social and economic realities of the city as to cultural differences. After 25 years of studying primitive peoples, Mead suggests that our focus on Native culture and our efforts to preserve it are often a thin disguise for our unwillingness to let Natives into full participation in the dominant society.[11]

Mead's thesis was borne out in my research. The social and economic realities of life in Anchorage appear to be equally or more important than Natives' cultural dispositions in explaining their low economic position. The Anchorage work force is largely white collar; since manufacturing accounts for only 2.5 percent of employment,[12] the economy cannot absorb the large proportion of low skilled workers in the Native labor force. Where low skilled jobs are available, Natives often lose out in the competition to whites who have higher education, skill, and experience levels than Natives. But since none of these qualifications is necessary to adequate performance of unskilled work, their Native status must play a part in their economically disadvantaged position.

[10]Margaret Mead, *New Lives for Old* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1956); Norman A. Chance, "Culture Change and Integration: An Eskimo Example," *American Anthropologist*, vol. 62, no. 6 (December 1960), pp. 1028-45.

[11]Mead, *New Lives*, p. 443.

[12]Alaska Department of Labor, Employment Security Division, *Statistical Quarterly 1972* (Juneau: 1972), p. A-13.

Employment discrimination against Natives is widespread. To cite a few examples: the Anchorage Borough employs only seven Natives out of a total workforce of 1,710,[13] less than half of 1 percent, while Natives comprise over 6 percent of the Anchorage population. Natives seldom appear in positions involving high visibility to the public. Of the four largest hotels in Anchorage, all operating restaurants, only one had any Native employees. Less than 1 percent of employees in the four largest department stores are Native. In places with liberal policies toward Native hire, Natives seldom hold high level positions, even those for which experience rather than professional training are requisite. (The Bureau of Indian Affairs is an exception).[14]

There are other barriers to equal employment opportunities for Anchorage Natives. For example, many application forms and tests are culturally biased, unions often require purchase of tools and a membership fee that may far exceed the resources of many Natives, and sometimes prejudice of supervisors and coworkers drives Natives from their jobs.

Discrimination and prejudice, of course, extend beyond the area of employment. Many Natives report landlord discrimination in refusing to rent to them. Others describe incidents of discrimination in casual encounters. An Eskimo woman recounted the humiliating experience of walking down the street and having white men grab her buttocks and call her *klootch* (squaw woman) and salmon cruncher. An Indian man described his anger when he walked into a business office seeking information, to be greeted gruffly with the question,

[13]Greater Anchorage Area Borough School District, *Employment, Race, and Sex Statistics for 1973-1974 as of December 1, 1973* (Anchorage: 1973).

[14]These data were secured by personal surveys and interviews.

"What do you want, war whoop?" Examples such as these are legion.

The severity of these problems and the adaptation tasks urban Natives face lead, in many instances, to serious social and emotional disorders. The Native suicide rate in Alaska is more than three times higher than the U.S. white, and the largest recent increase in Alaska is in the urban areas.[15] While the majority of Anchorage Natives requiring psychiatric hospitalization are served by the U.S. Public Health Service, 17 percent of the patients at the State psychiatric facility are Anchorage Natives,[16] nearly three times their proportion of the Anchorage population in the state facility alone.

Excessive drinking is another serious problem among urban Natives. It should be noted that the white alcoholism rate in Alaska is higher than the Native,[17] yet interest in Native drinking is much higher than in white alcoholism, and the majority of residents in Anchorage alcohol treatment facilities are Natives. The reason so much attention is directed toward Native drinking appears to be related to Natives' drinking patterns, which differ significantly from those of most whites. Natives usually drink precisely to get drunk with little effort to conceal signs of drunkenness. They generally engage in benders that may last for days, weeks, or even months, followed by

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[15]Robert F. Kraus, "Suicidal Behavior in Alaska Natives," *Alaska Medicine*, January 1973, pp. 6-10; Kraus, personal communication, March 1974.

[16]Virginia Barnes, Alaska Psychiatric Institute, medical records secretary, personal communication, August 1973.

[17]Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Alcoholism, *Allocation of Alcoholics in Alaska by Geographic, Sex, and Racial Indices* (Juneau: 1973), p. 25.

periods of sobriety. Drinking usually occurs in groups that party together until their combined cash resources are exhausted.[18]

This pattern of drinking often disables people from normal functioning. Clearly, extended bender drinkers cannot hold their jobs. Normal controls frequently break down: men may abuse their families; women may neglect their children. Lawless behavior such as vagrancy, fighting, and at times more violent acts are a corollary of this kind of drinking. In 1970 Natives accounted for 47 percent of all arrests in Anchorage.[19] The rescinding of the drunk in public statute in Alaska in 1971 has not resulted in decreasing the Anchorage Native arrest rate.[20]

The Anchorage social service system has shown very limited adaptation to the problems confronting urban Natives. Despite the accelerated urban migration of Natives in the 1960's and 1970's, Anchorage agencies have not joined in planning how to address the problems associated with Natives' urban transition. Nor have individual agencies generally adapted their programs to meet the needs of urban Native migrants. This is not really surprising; it is common knowledge that bureaucracies are rigid and resist change unless jolted by forces external to themselves.

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[18] For an analysis of Native drinking patterns, see Gerald D. Berreman, "Drinking Patterns of the Aleuts," *Quarterly Journal of Studies in Alcohol* 17 (September 1956):503-14; and Dorothy M. Jones, *A Study of Social and Economic Problems in Unalaska, an Aleut Village* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms: 1970), pp. 176-78.

[19] Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Alcoholism, *A Survey of Public Offenders II: A Comparison of Ethnic Groups* (Juneau: 1970), p. 26.

[20] Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Corrections, *Booking Profile Notes*, November 1973-February 1974 (Juneau: 1974), p. 2.

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And indeed, external pressures have not been sufficient to render the Anchorage social service system more responsive to urban Natives. One reason is the nonassertive personality disposition of many Natives. This is especially true of Aleuts and Eskimos who place the highest priority on avoiding conflicts and direct confrontations. Living with a northern Eskimo family for 18 months, Briggs identified avoidance of conflict and control of temper as cardinal virtues.[21] Veniaminov, an early ethnographer of Aleuts, pointed out that the Aleut language did not contain a single derogatory term and Aleuts became profoundly disturbed when receiving an undeserved reproach.[22] With very little formal authority in their villages, Eskimos and Aleuts have internalized norms regarding conflict avoidance and have evolved very effective techniques for managing hostility and conflict by informal and indirect means such as communication through a third person and sensitivity to such subtle nonverbal cues as a gesture or the flash of an eye. Athabascans show the same tendency to avoid conflict, although their internalization of conflict avoidance norms appears less strongly developed because they have generally relied on formal authority to resolve disputes.[23] Native clients of social agencies, then, are not prone to protest agency unresponsiveness either by individual or collective action. The welfare rights organization in Anchorage, for example, has virtually no Native members.

Another reason external pressures have not yet been strong enough to significantly increase agencies' responsiveness to

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[21]Jean L. Briggs, *Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 328-29.

[22]William H. Dall, *Alaska and Its Resources* (Boston: Lee and Shephard, 1870), p. 392, citing Veniaminov.

[23]Arthur E. Hippler, Alaskan ethnographer, personal communication, November 1973.

Natives' needs is that the Natives' major organizational spokesman, the regional organizations, have been preoccupied with legal and political struggles over their land rights. Native organizations are a relatively recent development in Alaska, proliferating in the mid-1960's when threats were posed to their land rights. Since the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971, Native organizations have been preoccupied with defending their benefits. They have been involved in legal actions to clarify ambiguities in and violations of the act, organizing themselves and the villages they represent as corporations, and addressing the shortage of trained Native personnel to run their organizations. As they have made progress in these efforts, they have increasingly turned their attention to Native health and social service needs, organizing several health associations, operating several social service programs in Anchorage, and pressuring established agencies for greater responsiveness to Natives' needs. Although they have won several concessions from the agencies, the recency of their efforts and the multiple demands upon their organizations have prevented them from exerting pressure strong enough to significantly change the Anchorage social service system. Thus, Anchorage Natives must deal with a relatively conventional, inflexible system that has shown only minimal adaptation to their needs.

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CHAPTER 3

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOCIAL SERVICE SYSTEM AND IMPACT ON CLIENTS

As mentioned, I shall focus on the characteristics of the social service system that seem to have the most destructive consequences for clients: fragmented services, underfunded services, irresponsible referral practices, lack of knowledge about Natives, lack of expectations for evaluating agency effectiveness, and the ritualization of interagency planning.

Whites predominate in the staffing of Anchorage social agencies. Of the 27 agencies in my sample, only three are Native-run; one is black-run; the rest are run by whites. Only one white-run agency has a Native administrator, an older person with many years experience with the agency. Except for those in Native-run social agencies, all but two of the social workers in the sample are non-Native.

Six agencies in the sample provide services exclusively for Natives: the three Native-run social agencies, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Services, and the Department of Defense Project Hire. The rest serve all ethnic groups.

Fragmentation of Services

Unlike other public services, which are generally organized and regulated as public utilities, social services are organized as if they were private competitive businesses. As Rein pointed

out, social welfare is the last bastion of entrepreneurship in the U.S.—anyone or any group can organize a social agency.[24] And, indeed, such a multiplicity of groups, organizations, and bureaus have initiated social service programs that the end result is a chaotic patchwork of piecemeal, uncoordinated services.

Social service study commissions as well as administrators and social workers decry fragmented services, asserting the impossibility of helping clients when addressing only a small piece of them. Yet fragmented services persist decade after decade with no sign of reform in sight.

While fragmented organization of services reflects larger social processes than those within the realm of control by social service bureaucrats, its persistence can be attributed in part to bureaucrats' career and organizational interests. Social agency administrators generally enter their field because of an interest in the public good. This interest leads them to oppose fragmented organization of services, which they see as a major impediment to their helping goals. But their public service interests often conflict with their career and organizational interests. For instance, they frequently advocate and join in planning to integrate and rationalize social services (and thereby overcome fragmentation), but when this planning threatens their own organizational domains, they generally oppose it (an issue that I shall elaborate later). Bureaucrats' persistence in opposing efforts to integrate and rationalize social services suggests that they place a higher priority on career than public service goals. Fragmented services assure bureaucrats of their organizational positions and of a larger market for administrator jobs. If multiple fragmented services were consolidated into a smaller number of administrative structures, then the market for social

[24]Martin Rein, *Social Policy: Issues of Choice and Change* (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 58.

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work administrators would sharply decline. Thus, the career goals of social work administrators are no different from those of managers in private business. Social work administrators often enter their field for idealistic reasons and then become career-oriented bureaucrats who subvert their own original impulses in the interests of their careers. In such ways, an irrational structure becomes perpetuated.

Fragmentation of services has repercussions throughout the social service system, affecting other organizational structures, social workers' behavior, and clients' adaptations.

Fragmentation and Funding

One consequence of fragmented organization of services is a reduction in the amount of money available for direct services to clients. There is, in the first place, only a finite amount of money available for social service programs, and that amount is generally limited because a considerable portion of taxpayers resist supporting programs that benefit persons they consider lazy and worthless: the "I pulled myself up by my own bootstraps so why can't they?" attitude. The limited amount of money is further compromised by the need to divide it among a multitude of fragmented social services, each with its own administrative structure. If there were only several administrative structures providing comprehensive social services instead of multiple services with multiple administrative structures, then clearly a great deal more money would be available for direct services to clients.

Every Anchorage social agency administrator I interviewed, save one, bitterly complained about underfinancing, naming it as a central frustration, and asserting that in some cases it resulted in further shaving the fragment of service they provide. For example, the state mental hygiene clinic is so underfunded it can afford only two staff members and has had

to curtail its services from treatment largely to intake. The state housing authority claims that because of underfunding it has more people on its waiting list than occupying its low cost housing units. Thus, fragmented services are generally inadequate services, lacking the resources to meet the needs even of those eligible for a particular fragment.

Fragmentation and the Referral Bounce

Because services are fragmented and inadequate, social workers face the continual necessity of either denying services outright or referring clients to another, usually equally fragmented service. Social workers generally choose to refer clients to other agencies even though they recognize that this course frequently generates a futile bouncing of clients from one inadequate service to another. As one social worker aptly described the process:

> I see my clients several times, then refer them to another agency . . . the other agency sees them once or twice, then either refers them back to us or to a third agency. The third agency usually follows the same course, referring the client to us, the second agency, or the fourth. We call it the referral bounce.

Both social workers and administrators justify this irresponsible referral practice by conceiving of themselves as "agencies of last resort," which means that they themselves do not provide services unless all other community resources are exhausted. The rub is that what agencies consider a community resource may be so in name only or may be so limited that it must turn away the bulk of applicants. An example is the tendency of social agencies to refer clients who need counseling to the state mental hygiene clinic, while the clinic has no recourse but to bounce the client to yet another agency. The use of the "agency of last resort" concept protects social workers and administrators from having to face more directly the reality that the referral bounce is often a disguised rejection.

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To further protect themselves from knowledge about the inadequacies of their services, social workers frequently fail to follow through on referrals. They often explain this failure in terms of excessive administrative demands for paper work. A counselor in a manpower training program said:

> If a client needs just a new pair of shoes, I have to fill out three or four pages of paper. I have so many reports to make that there are days when I don't even have time to see any clients, let alone follow through on referrals.

Requirements for paper work reach extreme proportions in public welfare agencies as the remarks of this social worker indicate:

> We have to fill out regular forms every day, plus a daily contact report plus a minute by minute account of one day's activities every quarter. If the forms are not made out right I have to redo them. It consumes so much of my time that I can only skim the surface with clients, handling most things by phone and limiting myself to emergency situations. Time for follow through on referrals seems never to be available.

This excessive involvement in paper work serves a ritualistic function by keeping social workers too busy to closely scrutinize their roles with clients. But it also promotes the referral bounce in another way. While social workers ritualize and rationalize some of the painful realities of agency inadequacies, they do not rest easily with this resolution. They also have a strong wish to help clients, and excessive demands of paper work cause them considerable frustration. Many social workers avoid this frustration by "bootlegging" a few long-term cases for which they bend regulations and invest themselves to the utmost. In this way, social workers can feel that they at least help a few clients. But since time for "bootlegged" cases must be stolen from other clients, this practice creates pressures for increased reliance on the referral bounce for the majority of clients.

Social workers' efforts to avoid harsh and thoughtless referrals, however dedicated, are at best palliative because the system of referral bounce is a product of fragmented and inadequate services.

Consequences of Fragmented Services for Clients

A majority of clients in my sample complained bitterly about the deprivation associated with fragmented services, but about a third of the clients did not feel frustrated or undermined by it; in fact they did not perceive the system as fragmented. Many in this group considered services beneficial. These positive experiences occurred under certain conditions: the clients had a short-term need for a single service, the agency service coincided with the need, and the agency social worker chose to make the service available. In some instances, two other conditions obtained: clients had alternative resources to supplement those of the agency and they had attributes that attracted special interest by the social worker. Sophie's experiences with the Bureau of Indian Affairs illustrate the operation of these conditions: (All names are fictitious.)

> Sophie was an unmarried pregnant Eskimo woman in her early twenties with a successful work history. She applied to the Bureau for short-term financial assistance when her pregnancy became too advanced to work. Sophie had clearly decided to keep the baby so she had no need of counseling services. Nonetheless, the social worker apparently took a special interest in Sophie, giving considerable time and attention to her problems and arranging to see her by appointment rather than the usual practice of having clients appear at the office to sit in the waiting room until called. The social worker gave Sophie an option between two plans—to live in a home for unwed mothers or to maintain her own apartment with a Bureau stipend of $202 a month. Sophie chose the latter. When an agency error caused a long delay in Sophie's check, she was not distressed; she could and did turn to relatives for help. Sophie considered the Bureau service very helpful.

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For most of the other clients in the sample, fragmented services had more harmful effects. Many of these Native migrants had no place to turn for help but the social agency. When that one source of help bounced them from agency to agency, frequently in an irresponsible fashion, or offered grossly inadequate help, the experience was profoundly dehumanizing, making the clients feel worthless and insignificant.

Some Native clients respond to this deprivation and humilation with extreme acts. Anna Marie's story is an example:

> After wandering around the country for three years with her husband, Anna Marie, a 22-year-old Alaska Native woman, became convinced that he would never settle down and provide a stable home for their two children, ages two and one. She left him, returning to Alaska and settling in Anchorage. With a high school education and secretarial training, she rather quickly found a job as a file clerk. She rented the cheapest apartment she could find in Anchorage for $178 a month (the cost of living in Anchorage is the highest in the nation, save for several other places in Alaska.)
>
> After having moved around from place to place her entire life, Anna Marie dedicated herself to giving her children a permanent and stable home. She felt she was accomplishing this goal. Then her baby sitter quit and she was unable to find a replacement.
>
> She resigned her job and sought help at the social service branch of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. When the social worker learned that Anna Marie's husband was white, she refused assistance, explaining that their regulations prohibit granting aid to Native women married to white men (BIA regulations do not prohibit aid to Native men married to white women). The social worker then referred Anna Marie to the Bureau's education branch, which has no prohibition against benefits to Native women married to white men. The director of the education branch said he could help Anna Marie if she entered a training program. "But I don't want training," she objected. " I want money to tide me over until I can find a baby sitter and a job. I want to support my children." The

director of the education branch referred Anna Marie back to the social worker in the social service branch, and the latter referred Anna Marie to state welfare.

To apply for welfare assistance, Anna Marie had to walk with the two small children roughly three miles to the welfare eligibility office. Sitting on a dilapidated folding chair in a darkish, dingy office, she waited several hours to be called, only to be given a application form and told to return with it the following day. While walking the three miles with the children the following day, she wondered what she would have done if this emergency had occurred in the bitter cold of the Alaskan winter. This day, after another several hours wait, she was told that she had forgotten one of the receipts needed to prove her need and would have to return again. The following day her application was processed. After Anna Marie answered multiple questions about the most intimate details of her life, many of which embarrassed and shamed her, the welfare office gave her the maximum Aid to Families with Dependent Children grant for a mother of two preschool children, $175 a month (in July 1974, this maximum grant for a mother of two children was increased to $300 a month). Anna Marie gasped, "but my rent alone exceeds that amount." The welfare eligibility worker was sorry, but there was nothing he could do but refer her to the food stamp and state low cost housing offices.

The housing counselor at Alaska State Housing Authority informed Anna Marie that there was an indefinite wait for low cost housing and that the waiting list was growing daily. Later, the agency administrator told me that recent budget cuts were forcing them to rent their low cost units to people at the top of the low income bracket who could pay a larger share of the rent than welfare recipients. So even without the long waiting list, Anna Marie's chances for low cost housing were slim.

Anna Marie turned over her first welfare check in toto to her landlord, then applied for food stamps. After lengthy and complicated calculations, the worker charged her $10 for food stamps. "But I don't have $10. My welfare check is less than my monthly rent," Anna Marie protested. The worker said he was sorry, but those were the regulations.

Despairing of any source of help, Anna Marie bought a bottle of aspirin, hoping they would help her escape into a few hours

> of sleep that afternoon. She left the bottle of aspirin on her dresser where her 2-year-old child found them and took an overdose. The child recovered after emergency treatment at the Indian Health Service hospital.
>
> Anna Marie was despondent. She felt like an abysmal failure, incapable of managing her life or raising her children. She slashed her wrists.

I met Anna Marie shortly after this in the psychiatric ward of the Indian Health Service hospital, the fifth social agency she had dealt with in less than a 2-month period. Each of these agencies had referred her, denied her service outright, or addressed just a fragment of her need. None of the agencies had followed through on their referrals.

I do not mean to attribute Anna Marie's suicide attempt wholly to the social service system because her background experiences also may have played a part. But I do mean to suggest that agencies made a substantial contribution to the events that led to Anna Marie's suicide attempt. Her response is not uncommon in my sample; 12 percent of the clients (six of fifty) admitted suicide attempts, and these appeared to be related, in part, to their agency experiences. This proportion is probably even larger considering that many respondents may have been reluctant to confess suicide attempts. Those who volunteered such information usually did so in the second or third interview, and all expressed shame about it.

Other clients respond to fragmented and inadequate services by separating themselves from the agencies. This was especially evident among some Natives in alcoholic rehabilitation programs, which they do not tend to perceive as social agencies. In explaining why she avoids social agencies, an Indian woman in an alcohol rehabilitation program said:

> They push you here and they push you there, and they don't help and they don't care. Social workers keep their jobs whether they help you or not.

An Eskimo man in the same facility said:

> I would rather be a Fourth Avenue bum than ever again go to a social worker.

Clients who submit to the fragmented and inadequate social services often must find ways to manipulate the system in order to survive. For example, one client deliberately showed up at the Bureau of Indian Affairs office after 4:30 p.m. when she knew the social workers had left and told such a poignant "sob" story to the secretaries still on duty that they dared not refuse her emergency assistance. She said:

> If the social workers had been there, they probably would have put me through an inquisition and then refused help.

An official in public welfare, keenly aware that the way the system is organized and operated forces clients to manipulate it, vehemently declared:

> Our services are so inadequate that they drive women to prostitution, topless dancing, lying, cheating, any means to survive.

Anna Marie's case and these incidents illustrate some of the ways that fragmented and inadequate services and staff's efforts to adapt to and rationalize them result in promoting client suicide attempts, lying, cheating, prostitution, and in driving people without alternatives out of the system where they may have no place to turn but the Fourth Avenue drinking subculture. In these ways, the social service system, unwittingly or not, contributes to psychologically and socially deviant adaptations by clients.

The Mystique of Expertise

It is widely known that social agencies lack a knowledge base for rehabiliting the poor; that knowledge base is even more

deficient for urban Natives. Social work and psychiatric training provide little relevant background, and virtually no Native-serving social agency in Anchorage furnishes staff training in cross-cultural understanding on a consistent basis.[25] In part, this reflects the lack of content for such training; social and psychological theories about American Indians are not well enough developed to provide a foundation for expertise in the treatment and rehabilitation of Natives.

Considering that most social workers enter their field because of an interest in helping people, I wondered why, in the absence of a firm body of knowledge, they did not turn to their clients for an understanding of Native people. All the social workers I interviewed have considerable contact with Native clients. Yet, I found this practice to be nearly nonexistent; social workers simply do not view clients as a reliable source for information about Native culture. The reason for this, I believe, is that reliance on clients for information about themselves would expose the social workers' lack of expertise. This does not mean that social workers are dissembling when they assert an interest in helping clients, but that other values also influence their actions. Friedson addresses this issue in an insightful analysis of professional values:

> The occupation being the source of focus of this commitment, the individual is naturally concerned with the prestige of the occupation and its position in the class structure and in the market place. Thus empirical studies of undergraduate aspirants to the major professions find them to be not only interested in helping people . . . but also interested in the high income and prestige they expect from their professional careers. Such findings seem to belie dedication and are treated

[25]There are some exceptions to this. Alaska Psychiatric Institute has involved its staff in collecting and discussing data collected by staff from field trips to Native villages. Other agencies may give an occasional seminar or workshop on cross-cultural relationships.

by many analysts of professions with either silence or embarassment.[26]

I found that it was not only a question of the operation of both sets of values but of the priority social workers assign them. While the majority of social workers in my sample complained bitterly about the many constraints frustrating their helping goals, when I asked why they remained on their jobs, they generally always referred to satisfactions gained from relatively high salaries and occupational position. Clearly, those who remain in the system give higher priority to career interests than to helping clients when these two goals conflict. Since advancing their careers requires promoting the prestige and reputation of their professions, social workers tend to perpetuate the mystique of expertise rather than to help clients when such help threatens to expose the mystique.

Since social workers' occupational position and status, indeed, the very marketability of their skills, rests on claims to professional expertise, they face a dilemma. How, in the absence of technical expertise, do they prove their claim to it. They must assert their expertise not only to maintain their occupational position and status but also to achieve an inner sense of coherence and integration, which requires resolving this dilemma.

One of the chief means social workers use to resolve this dilemma is to substitute ideology for technical expertise; they tend to interpret Natives' problems and behavior from their own white middle class cultural perspective. This cultural bias in social work has been widely recognized. For example, Brager and Barr wrote:

[26]Eliot Friedson, *Professional Dominance: The Social Structure of Medical Care* (New York: Atherton Press, 1970), p. 153.

> The technology of social work like that of other educative professions is culturally bound and inflexible. The profession, inevitably owned and operated by middle class persons, has failed to take into account not only the differing needs but the differing style of low income persons.[27]

Social workers showed no reluctance to discuss their interpretations of Native culture and behavior, but most talked about it in pejorative terms as deviations from their own culture, the superiority of which few questioned. Even some of the counter-culture staff members did not question the superiority of dominant society values regarding work, time, and money. Only one social worker, a black, emphasized the strengths of Native culture; he placed special emphasis on Natives' high valuation of family closeness, cooperation, sharing, and mutual aid. Most of the rest saw Natives only through their own cultural lenses as the following quotes illustrate:

> Natives have no long range goals. They don't understand anything about planning for the future.

> Natives don't understand the world of work. They don't understand our orientation to time, they have no clock orientation; they don't even have much experience, most have never done anything but fish.

> Natives have been improperly socialized; they haven't even been socialized to drink properly.

> Natives have no psychological awareness; they don't know how to verbalize or express their emotions.

The use of these culturally biased generalizations serve not only to convince social workers that they are knowledgeable

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[27] George A. Brager and Sherman Barr, "Perceptions and Reality: The Poor Man's View of Social Services," in *Community Action Against Poverty: Readings from Mobilization Experiences*, ed. George A. Brager and Francis Purcell (New Haven: College and University Press, 1967), p. 80.

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about Natives and Native culture, but also that Natives are not a reliable source of information about themselves. Part and parcel of the social worker's cultural bias is the belief that Natives are social and psychological cripples. This belief effectively discredits Natives as sources for information about their culture. In the few instances I knew of in which Natives volunteered feedback about their social agency experiences, social workers ignored it. For example, Simeone, an Aleut resident of an alcoholic rehabilitation center and a very articulate, assertive person, told staff members about practices he found culturally alienative such as the expectation to directly expose actions and feelings about which he was ashamed. I later asked one of the counselors in the facility about his and other counselors responses to Simeone's confidence. He answered:

> It doesn't matter what they [Native clients] say, because our central task is to teach them how to verbalize and express emotions; nothing can deter us from that.

The point here is not whether Simeone's ideas about effective treatment were right or wrong, but that the staff ignored them.

Social workers use other devices to insulate themselves against client feedback. They require clients to meet them on their turf where agency and social workers' rules, definitions, and interpretations of problems prevail. Under these circumstances, there is little opportunity for social workers to learn about Natives' history, attitudes, urban adjustment problems, how they behave in a natural setting such as their homes (most home visits are for the purpose of investigation), and how Natives feel about agencies' services and social workers' behavior. This type of social worker control over interaction with clients has become so habitual that it operates nearly automatically and social workers have come to think of it as natural rather than as a system for insulation. The pervasiveness of this insulation was revealed to a social worker after she was jolted

out of this pattern of interaction. When accompanying a Native client to a meeting, she was surprised to discover the many subtle, demeaning ways Natives are socially excluded in an interracial social situation. For the past 10 years that she had worked with Native clients, she had been largely unaware of this painful reality in the everyday lives of Natives.

In addition to insulating themselves from client sources of information, social workers also tend to affirm their expert status by socializing clients to a role of humble supplicant. Social workers achieve this by treating clients in degrading ways. In his study of total institutions, Goffman presents compelling evidence to show that patients in mental hospitals are exposed to a pervasive process of mortification which involves stripping them of their rights, possessions, affirmations, satisfactions, and defenses.[28] While less extreme in most of the agencies I studied, I observed a similar process of mortification. Social workers delve into the most intimate details of clients' lives; for example, they may question clients about their sex lives and last menstrual period. They tend to impugn clients' veracity by detective-like probing, an approach encouraged by administrators who are concerned about the cautious distribution of resources. To weed out ineligibles, social workers question and demand proof of clients' allegations, and in some instances, spy on clients by seeking information about them from neighbors and other agencies. Clients are humiliated by these practices as the following quotes show:

> They asked me over and over again and time after time why I left my husband and I told them because he was living with another woman. They didn't believe me. That was the hardest part for me. It blew my mind. I couldn't believe what was happening. They tore up my application right in front of my

[28] Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situations of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1961), p. 35.

> eyes and threw it in the trash. They didn't believe a word I said . . . (These experiences) made me suspicious about people. I decided I had to test everyone because you have to be leery about who to trust.
>
> They make you feel like a beggar. Keep asking questions like why aren't you working, why aren't you this, why aren't you that. Don't they know if we didn't need help we wouldn't be there. We Eskimos aren't beggars. Oh maybe when we're drunk we beg, but only from each other. Why do they want to make us feel so low down.
>
> Social workers think all Eskimos are dumb or drunks. They treat you that way even before they know you, always telling you what to do as if we can't figure it out for ourselves. And if you don't do what they tell you, then they threaten you, told me if I didn't go for treatment they would send me to jail, so I went to treatment where they told me if I didn't cooperate more they would send me to jail.

If clients want agency services, they learn to submit to these mortification processes and act the role of humble supplicant. Most social workers' image of the ideal client is one who does not complain and who shows appreciation. Such clients pose no threat to the worker's self-image as expert.

Mystique of Expertise and the Evaluation Hiatus

Clearly, since social workers lack expertise, they and their agencies cannot risk systematic evaluation of their efforts. Local agencies and their parent organizations depend as much as social workers on the claim to professional expertise; their legitimation and financial support hinge on it. Any systematic investigation of the effects of social services on clients threatens to expose the mystique of expertise. Consequently, an absence of expectations and requirements for systematic evaluation of social work success with clients pervades the social service system at all levels. (Manpower and training agencies are exceptions, although their evaluations are limited to records of

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numbers of enrollees, placements, completions, and dropouts, and include virtually no follow-up.)

This is not to suggest that agencies evaluate no aspects of their work, but rather than evaluating the effects of their services on clients, agencies evaluate such things as budget management, number of recipients, and use of staff time. These criteria serve as symbols of success which cover up the reality of widespread failure. In some instances, the activities which are evaluated as criteria of success are those which pose direct obstacles to helping clients. In analyzing statistical record keeping in a state employment agency, Blau points out the powerful influence these evaluation criteria have on workers' behavior and some of the dysfunctions of these criteria.[29]

One such instance of dysfunction is apparent in current evaluation practices in public welfare where error rates are a central criterion for evaluating workers' performance. The emphasis on error rate stems from federal government surveillance of state welfare agencies (quality control) involving periodic investigations of errors in eligibility determinations. The discovery of errors in case openings that exceed the allowable 3.5 percent rate can result in the loss to the state of about $40,000 in federal matching funds for each error.[30] This evaluation criterion applies not only to eligibility workers who make the decision on applications, but also to social service workers who must report any change in client circumstances to the eligibility worker. While constrained by law from conducting

[29]Peter M. Blau, *The Dynamics of Bureaucracy: A Study of Interpersonal Relations in Two Government Agencies*, Revised Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 36-55.

[30]Fred Smith, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Family and Children Services, personal communication, July 1973.

direct investigations of recipients, such as seeking information about a client from a bank or neighbor, an implicit injunction to "catch chiselers" operates among both social workers and eligibility workers. This emphasis on error rate generates social worker attitudes of suspicion toward recipients and leads them to act aggressively in their attempts to trap clients. By applying this evaluation criterion to social workers' performance, agencies create pressures for social workers to behave in alienative ways that clearly undermine their helping goals.

Whether or not agencies provide financial assistance, staff members are generally evaluated on use of their time. In state agencies, staff members must keep records of numbers of phone calls, memos, letters, conferences, and client contacts. They are also evaluated in terms of grooming, staff relations, and quality of work. The "quality of work" criterion usually functions ritualistically. Supervisors were generally unable to articulate the criteria they apply to evaluate quality of work, and they became uncomfortable and at times angry when pressed on this point. A typical reply was:

> Well, it depends on the worker, on his strengths and weaknesses. You have to get a feel of the person. I can't tell you what criteria I use.

I encountered not a single instance in which supervisors systematically evaluated quality of work in terms of workers' success with clients. Thus, while busily engaged in the act of evaluating, agencies avoid the central test of their worth—success with clients.

I do not mean to minimize the obstacles to evaluating social service effectiveness. Agency objectives are often intangible or stated in such global terms that they belie measurement. It is difficult to select indicators of success. Is an alcoholic who increases his sobriety cycle from 3 days to 2 weeks a success? Is the placement of a child abused by his parents in an inadequate foster home a favorable outcome? Is the placement

of a seasonally employed Native on a demeaning year-round job a successful outcome? But the existence of technical obstacles only explains why evaluations of social service success are difficult, not why agencies do not try to overcome these obstacles and devise as adequate systems of evaluation as possible.

The most compelling explanation for agencies' resistance to evaluating the success of their efforts is fear of exposing multiple failures. Although few administrators or social workers acknowledge this fear, I found abundant evidence of it on a covert level. When I asked administrators and staff about their evaluation systems, I encountered considerable defensiveness; I found this question to be more sensitive than any others. Several informants abruptly changed the subject when I asked about their evaluation systems. One responded by jumping from his chair and making tea, then inviting another staff member to join us, and the issue was lost. Several others replied, "I don't believe in using figures or statistics where human beings are concerned," and they said this in an accusatory tone of voice, as if I were suspect for asking the question. Still others charged me outright with having asked a loaded question. There was other evidence: staff members gave more contradictory information on this issue than on any other; the assertions of some administrators and staff members about evaluations and agency effectiveness were vigorously contradicted by others as well as by clients.

In short, the evaluation hiatus in social services, that is, the avoidance of assessing success with clients, protects social workers and administrators from equating directly with their deficient technical knowledge. It also protects them from exposures that could jeopardize their professional standing and organization funds. In these ways the evaluation hiatus masks agency pathologies.

Consequences of the Mystique of Expertise for Clients

The mystique of expertise finds expression in the substituting of culturally biased conceptions for genuine understand-

ing, discrediting of Natives as sources of information or feedback, socializing Natives to a stigmatized status, and avoiding evaluations that could serve as a basis for correcting these agency pathologies.

These practices often have devastating effects on clients. About one-third of the clients in the sample exhibited social and psychological pathologies that could be attributed in part to their mortifying experiences with agencies.

Cultural biases often give rise to agency policies and practices that consistently undermine Natives' sense of worth and integrity. Consider the Alaska State Housing Authority regulation prohibiting visits to tenants that extend beyond 2 weeks.

> John, an older Eskimo resident of a low cost housing unit in Anchorage, was baffled at trying to figure out how to handle an anticipated visit by his mother. How could he tell her to leave after 2 weeks when traditional village hospitality entails open-ended welcome. This same regulation forced him to refuse a request for a home from his daughter's high school friend from the same village. This girl had become very depressed in her white boarding home. John was eager to give her a home but housing regulations forbid it. Shortly after the girl learned this, she dropped out of school and returned to her village.

This regulation runs counter to the very basis of Eskimo norms regarding hospitality and to the system of mutual obligations. Rather than building on such strengths in Eskimo culture, public housing policies disregard and even degrade them, depriving an Eskimo like John of even the opportunity to actively transmit these positively valued traditions to his children, and of course, depriving John of a basis on which his self-esteem and sense of pride depends.

White-run alcoholic rehabilitation facilities in Anchorage provide other illustrations of culturally biased practices. Many workers in these agencies show little awareness of cultural difference in the meaning attributed to drinking. In many Native

villages, drinking has become a dominant symbol of group solidarity. This is quite apparent in the Aleutians, the culture area with which I am most familiar. After the Russians introduced alcohol in the mid-eighteenth century and in the same period prohibited ceremonials, Aleuts appear to have substituted the drinking bender for aboriginal ceremonies. Aleuts drank to celebrate the end of fishing or hunting season, a holiday, a name day, or simply when a batch of home brew matured. In the past drinking was seldom accompanied by violence or other community disruptions; nondrinking adults watched over the children of drinkers. But when traditional social structures and institutions disintegrated as a consequence of white contact, drinking became progressively less controlled. Today Aleuts, as well as other Natives, express ambivalent attitudes toward drinking. On the one hand, it constitutes a primary symbol of group solidarity; on the other, it threatens to incapacitate individuals from performing social roles. The point here is not whether the drinking represents a clear-cut positive cultural value to Natives, but that social workers generally fail to understand the meaning of drinking to Natives.

One difference in definition is that Natives usually do not see drinking as comprising their total identity, whereas white professionals tend to define and treat them as if it were. When Natives are not drinking, they work or engage in other activities, and they view each other in terms of these activities. In one village I studied where drinking was widespread, villagers identified only one of their number as alcholic. However, when Natives are found drunk on Fourth Avenue, the Native drinking center in Anchorage, police frequently refer them to alcoholic rehabilitation centers where they are defined as alcoholics and treated as if that were their totality.

Once in the treatment facility, in addition to being labelled alcoholic, Natives may also be labelled emotionally defective because they organize and manage their emotions differently from white professionals. Natives tend to place a high value on

avoiding overt expressions of negative affect, usually managing such emotions in indirect and covert ways. Aleut cultural norms, for example, strongly disapprove of complaining, worrying, or dwelling on troubles. "Get up and do something" is the common Aleut injunction to a complainer or worrier. Getting drunk may be considered a more honorable way to handle troubles than fretting or complaining. But most treatment facilities, following the principles of insight therapy, expect direct expression and exploration of emotions, especially anger, an orientation that is culturally alien to many Natives. Those who fail this expectation are negatively sanctioned, usually in subtle ways, and treated as if they are emotionally defective. Simeone, who I mentioned earlier in relation to giving the agency feedback about culturally alienative practices, said:

> The women have it easier than we do. All they have to do is shed a few tears to get the counselors off their backs. But we have to lose our tempers or stand up publicly in front of strangers at AA meetings and demean ourselves by chest beating. That runs against our cultural grain. We have only a shred of pride left and that wipes it out.

To be labelled alcoholic and emotionally defective for behavior that is acceptable in one's own culture is a mortifying experience; it is also dysfunctional for adjustment to one's own cultural group.

I do not mean to deny the importance of drinking problems among Natives or to criticize agencies for addressing these problems. Nor do I mean to imply that the cultural issue is the only relevant one in the treatment of Native drinking problems. Some of the dysfunctional features of alcoholism are universal. But I do mean to suggest that treatment that fails to take into account Natives' cultural patterns and attitudes toward drinking is doomed from the outset. Furthermore, it creates additional problems for Native drinkers by stigmatizing them and defining them in culturally alien ways.

Examples of culturally biased definitions and practices appear to be flagrant in child welfare services. Some of the most disturbed clients in my sample began their careers as agency clients many years ago when they became victims of the uninformed, culturally biased social work practice of removing Native children from their homes and villages. Indeed, the abduction of Indian children by social agencies has reached scandalous proportions nationwide. In a recent survey the Association on American Indian Affairs reported that in states with large Indian populations, 25 to 35 percent of all Indian children are removed from their families and placed in foster homes, adoptive homes, or institutions.[31] I encountered this practice in an Aleut village I studied, where public welfare social workers, confusing poverty and cultural difference with social deprivation and psychological abuse, removed 19 Native children in a 15-month period.[32] This represented nearly one-third of the minor children in the Native community. In addition to the trauma of being separated from their families, these children faced enforced migration to strange and distant places. Most of these children were placed in urban foster homes and institutions. This practice affected 14 percent of my sample, setting in motion a chain of traumatic events in their lives.[33] Here is Tatiana's story:

> When she was 5 years old, a public welfare social worker visiting her village removed Tatiana and her seven siblings from the home while the parents were away drinking. The social worker

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[31] Association on American Indian Affairs, Inc., *Family Defense*, Bulletin of the Association on American Indian Affairs, Inc., no. 1 (Winter 1974) p. 1.

[32] Dorothy M. Jones, "Child Welfare Problems in an Alaskan Native Village," *Social Service Review* vol. 43, no. 3 (1969), pp. 297-309.

[33] For a powerful journalistic account of the plight of child custody cases, see Lisa A. Richette, *The Throwaway Children* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1969).

was apparently unaware that drinking is acceptable in many Native villages and that nondrinking adults frequently keep an eye on the children of drinking parents. In any event, when the parents returned home that evening, they found the house empty and no one in the village knew the children's whereabouts. In response to the parent's desperate plea on the shortwave radio for information about the children, the public welfare agency contacted them, explaining that they removed the children only temporarily and would return them in several weeks. Only one child was ever returned to the parents. Another was given for adoption. Four were dispersed in separate urban foster homes and institutions. Only two remained together, Tatiana and her sister, placed in an urban children's institution.

About 70 boys and girls, predominantly Native, lived in Tatiana's institution. As it was isolated from the town, the inmates seldom had the chance to socialize with town children. The Christian group that ran the home was quite restrictive, prohibiting television, comics, and many other activities in which ordinary children engage. Tatiana and the other children in the home shared a burning desire to find out how other "normal" children lived. When the children reached their early teens, they began to rebel against their restrictive environment, frequently running away from the home to join town children. There were so many runaways, Tatiana said, that the home was closed.

Tatiana was then placed in a succession of white foster homes, but her needs were no better met in these settings, and she continued to run away from the homes, joining peers in the town.[34] When her social worker called her a tramp because of her habitual running away, Tatiana said she decided to try to convey to the woman what her life had been like. "I thought she would help me if I could make her understand what it felt like to be taken from my parents when I was five, separated from my brothers and sisters, living apart from other kids my age in the town, and then forced to live in strange foster homes that made me feel uncomfortable and frightened." But Tatiana's efforts only angered the social worker who rejoined:

[34]State regulations for foster homes, based on middle class standards, render a disproportionate number of Native homes ineligible for foster care licenses.

"No excuses for your wildness, you are incorrigible." and she promptly filed incorrigibility charges against 14-year-old Tatiana.

Since there was no youth detention center in town, Tatiana was placed in the adult prison to await court hearing. Not only frightened and bewildered, but ashamed to her core because, although she didn't understand how she came to be considered a criminal, she figured she must be rotten through and through. Tatiana slashed her wrists. But this had no apparent effect on hastening the court hearing. Tatiana spent 5 months in the adult prison awaiting her hearing after which she was sentenced to 17 additional months in a juvenile correctional facility in another state. Upon her return to Alaska, although no charges were pending, Tatiana was placed in an Anchorage youth correctional facility.

Tatiana felt an uncontrollable rage. She began to fight her peers, sometimes with knives, and spent most of her 7 months there in solitary confinement. Then a probation officer took special interest in her case and advocated and won her release.

Now 17 years old, Tatiana moved in with her 19-year-old sister who lived in a tiny apartment with a baby and a mate. Neither of the adults were employed. Feeling she was in the way, Tatiana applied for welfare assistance so she could rent her own place. She was denied assistance because her guardian (her sister and only relative in town) was under 21 years of age. Welfare regulations prohibit making payments to underage guardians. Tatiana then appealed for help from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The social worker said if she had a job they could help her with her first month's rent and the purchase of household items. Tatiana went to another agency which placed her in a job, then advised the BIA that she now had a job. The Bureau social worker told her that they could not assist her because she was now under the jurisdiction of the job placement agency, even though this latter agency did not provide the services Tatiana was seeking from the Bureau. So Tatiana moved in with her boyfriend, and shortly thereafter attempted to stab him. Tatiana's greatest fear is that her rage will continue to break out in uncontrolled ways.

Tatiana said that of the 70 children with whom she grew up in the institution, all but five are alcoholic or drug addicts,

some are prostitutes, and most have been in and out of jails. Of the entire group, Tatiana said, she is the only one holding a steady job.

Tatiana's story illustrates not only the effects of cultural biases and demeaning practices associated with upholding the mystique of expertise, but also of fragmented services and the referral bounce. I am telling the full story of Tatiana's experiences with agencies to show how these features coalesce to produce serious emotional problems in clients.

Tatiana's experiences, as well as those of other clients, show how the agencies tend to operate in self-fulfilling ways. Because agencies treat clients as worthless and mortify them, clients come to behave in ways that fulfill agencies' preconceptions and biases. In essence, agency pathologies become transformed into individual pathologies as clients internalize the agencies' view of them.

Interagency Planning Rituals

Interagency planning is often initiated precisely to overcome some of the agency pathologies I have just discussed. The goals of planning groups are to (1) integrate and coordinate services, (2) evaluate services sufficiently to distinguish the more from the less effective, (3) promote new services, and (4) pool information and experiences in order to expand the limited knowledge base. But the same forces that give rise to these agency pathologies also operate as a pressure to keep planners from overcoming them.

Agency administrators and social workers representing administration are the primary participants in interagency planning. Their actions in planning groups reflect the operation of two sets of values. On the one hand, they are committed to the professional goal of trying to increase the rationality of the

social service system. This commitment prompts them to initiate or to join in interagency planning. On the other hand, they want to protect their own agency's jurisdiction. This interest frequently induces them to oppose efforts to rationalize services. Individual participants usually resolve this ambivalence by placing highest priority on planning goals when their own agency jurisdictions are not threatened and highest priority on career and organizational survival goals when their territories are endangered.[35]

This solution, however, gives rise to a collective dilemma. Conflict is inherent in the interagency planning situation, yet conflict threatens the entire planning venture, the success of which participants believe requires harmony and cooperation. Planning participants generally handle this dilemma by avoiding issues that seriously threaten group cohesion, focusing instead on the less controversial and less important issues.[36] This gives planning procedures a ritualistic quality where participants go through the motions of planning with little consequence to the existing organization and delivery of social services. I shall elaborate this process and its dynamics as I observed them in the four planning groups with which the sample agencies were most involved: Ad Hoc Committee on Child Abuse, Social

[35]Among authors who underscore the power of jurisdictional interests in shaping planning efforts are: Harold B. Chetkow, "Some Factors Influencing the Utilization and Impact of Priority Recommendations in Community Planning," *Social Service Review* vol. 41, no. 3 (September 1967), pp. 271-82; and Peter Marris and Martin Rein, *Dilemmas of Social Reform: Poverty and Community Action in the U.S.* (New York: Atherton Press, 1969).

[36]Bachrach and Baratz propose the concept "the non-decision" to encompass the process in planning groups where power is exercised by confining the scope of decision making to relatively safe issues in Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, *Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

Services Planning Group, Alcoholism Interagency Management Group, and Anchorage Manpower Planning Board.

Jurisdictional Disputes

The very act of a planning council identifying inadequacies in a service, let us say in agency A, poses a threat to agency A. Although members of agency A may be well aware of the inadequacies and limitations of their own service, they are reluctant to be publicly exposed for several reasons. First, public exposure carries the implication that workers delivering the service are inept. Second, repeated public exposure could and has induced councils to recommend defunding of services. This occurred in both the Alcoholism Interagency Management Group and the Manpower Planning Board. Third, exposing inadequacies of a service prompts councils to promote the establishment of supplementary services in another agency or to create a new agency for this purpose. The new agency may perform the service better than agency A or it may assume responsibility for related services, in both cases, threatening to reduce agency A's jurisdiction. Thus, planning council meetings are characterized by conflict between and within individual participants, reflecting the incompatibilities between their desire to improve services and their desire to prevent the establishment of new services that jeopardize existing agency jurisdictions.

The Ad Hoc Committee's meetings dramatically illustrated this conflict. The Committee's central aim is to organize services that will supplement those provided by the child protection unit in public welfare. The unit is so understaffed that workers must handle a substantial portion of their work by telephone. In addition, the unit suffers from a dearth of necessary resources in their agency and in the community. The Committee has identified an acute need to organize the following supple-

mentary services: hot line for families in crisis, crisis nursery, emergency shelters, emergency foster homes, and parent aides to stay in clients' homes and help families during crises.

The major contest in the Committee was between representatives of welfare and those of other agencies who pressed for establishing new supplementary services for child protection. A borough health department representative sought Committee approval for a child protection unit administered by the borough. It would include a child protection coordinator, crisis nursery, and family aide program. Alaska Children's Services, an innovative, church-sponsored agency, sought Committee approval for a crisis hot line and mobile team to visit families in crisis on the spot. Representatives from welfare opposed the Committee's support for both proposals, arguing that these new services would be inadequate because they would (1) be operated by unqualified persons (welfare workers themselves are not trained social workers), (2) create duplication of services, (3) confuse clients about which agency to call in an emergency, and (4) probably be illegal because state law authorizes only public welfare to handle all child abuse cases. Welfare representatives suggested that the Committee had adopted the wrong goal; rather than try to establish new services, it should try to improve the existing ones in welfare. No Committee member seemed to object in principle to strengthening existing welfare services, but according to one of the key participants in the Committee, the need for adequate child protection services is so acute that it cannot await the outcome of the long, arduous, and usually hopeless process of changing the rigid welfare system. But in view of strenuous opposition from welfare, the committee postponed action on proposals for new services.

This conflict and similar ones I observed do not appear to disrupt interagency planning groups. If an issue threatens to

disrupt the group, members table it or handle it under the table rather than confront it overtly. Members generally inhibit expressions of hostility, treating each other with politeness and respect regardless of animosities that may smolder beneath the surface. In some instances, the congeniality I observed reflects long-standing friendship ties between members. But more importantly, this style of consensus politics reflects the reality that participants are part of the same system and have to protect the same interests. If one agency's jurisdiction can be reduced or weakened, then so can another's. So everyone tends to play the same political game for fear his turn is coming. Thus, planning becomes a ritual rather than a medium of reform.

Interagency Control System

Planning participants' complicity in maintaining consensus at the costs of the express goals of planning seems to reflect their recognition of the underlying realities of interagency power relations. While there is no formal, publicly acknowledged authority structure in the interagency system, there is an informal, implicit power structure stemming from the degree of dominance or subordination in agencies' relations to each other. All agencies are interdependent in the sense that they rely on one another for continual flow of referrals (customers), which nurtures the entire social service industry. But there are also differences in degrees of dependence between agencies. Agencies with very limited resources are more dependent on agencies with large resources than vice versa. If the limited agency antagonizes an agency with larger resources, that agency can and sometimes does retaliate by refusing service to its referrals. This practice is suggested by the ubiquitous care with which small agency administrators avoid antagonizing those from more powerful agencies even though they may claim, in private conversation, to abhor some of the practices of the more power-

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ful agencies. There is also verbal testimony to this practice. For example, an aggressive program director in a new alcoholism facility who is also a member of a minority group charged complicity among some of the agencies involved in alcohol treatment who refused service to his referrals. He thought this was because he had antagonized members of the Alcoholism Interagency Management Group by playing an outspoken truth-telling role, thereby challenging the style of consensus politics.

Agencies with large resources wield power in other ways. By failing to refer to agencies that depend on them for referrals, they have the power to undermine such agencies. This practice will be elaborated shortly in a discussion of Urban Native Center's relations with the social service community. Agencies with large resources can also exert control over other agencies through manipulating funds and contracts. Bureau of Indian Affairs and public welfare grant a number of contracts to other agencies. If these agencies with contracts antagonize their sponsors, they risk jeopardizing their funds.

The implicit recognition of this interagency power structure determines outcomes in informal agency relations as well as in formal planning groups. Negotiations at the Ad Hoc Committee meetings suggested the force of this recognition. Members could not afford to antagonize public welfare for three reasons. First, since most member agencies are small scale and frequently refer clients to welfare, the success of their efforts requires maintaining harmonious relations with welfare. Second, some of the member agencies are funded by welfare's parent organization, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. Third, the Ad Hoc Committee depends for its very legitimacy on the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, which accorded the Committee official status as the planning group for child protection. Consensus politics symbolize the recognition of these power relations.

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Socialization of New Members

While representatives of established agencies generally accept these political realities, members of newer agencies, such as the new program director in the alcohol treatment facility previously mentioned, sometimes challenge them. The very existence of the newer agencies bespeaks challenge; for example, Native-run agencies are in business precisely to redistribute social service resources. Regulation of this challenge has become a central task of the interagency system in Anchorage. Its efforts to socialize new members involve transmittal of three expectations. New members are expected to: (1) accept limited jurisdictions without trying to expand them in ways that further impinge on other agencies' territories, (2) accept the existing power structure in social services, and (3) accept the prevalent style of consensus politics.

The process by which these expectations are transmitted is subtle and frequently invisible. I observed several instances of the process. One was when the program director of an alcoholism facility, mentioned above, was chastised by members of the Alcoholism Interagency Management Group for abrasive manners. Members suggested he tone down his language and change his style of dress. But the socialization process becomes highly visible when sanctions are invoked against new agencies that fail to become properly socialized. The most striking illustration of this is the Urban Native Center's relations in the interagency system.

Challenge to the Interagency System

In 1970, Nixon's policy statement on Indian self-determination and Bureau of Indian Affairs' policy regarding turning over Bureau services to Indian groups encouraged Cook Inlet Native Association, one of the largest Native organizations in Alaska, to establish itself as a provider of social services for

Natives. To this end, it applied for a contract to operate the Bureau's general relief program and, later, the Bureau's employment assistance program. Neither of these contracts was awarded. But in 1972, the Anchorage Community Action Agency funded the Cook Inlet Native Association to operate an urban Native center. The Urban Native Center subsequently received a Bureau of Indian Affairs contract to operate a transportation service for enrollees in Project Hire (an on-the-job training program for Natives) and an Indian Health Service contract to administer the health aide program in the Cook Inlet region. With these contracts and Community Action Agency funds, which enabled it to establish social service, employment assistance, and airport transportation programs as well as a craft shop and recreation center, the Urban Native Center was in business. But the Native Center was not satisfied with this narrow jurisdiction. Conceiving itself as a comprehensive social service, it sought additional funds and contracts for providing more services regardless of the extant distribution of service domains:

> The Native Center also posed a strong challenge to the existing power structure in Anchorage social services when it assumed leadership for organizing a social service planning council without consulting the recognized and established agency leaders. Some administrators viewed this action as a declaration of intent not to abide by the implicit rules of the social service system. This is suggested by administrators' remarks such as: "They (the Center) have no genuine interest in planning, they are just trying to increase their power."

The Native Center may have been held responsible for violating another expectation of the interagency system. At the same time that it was a contractee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Center's regional corporation filed a suit against the Bureau's parent organization, Department of Interior, regarding

land claims. Center leadership thought this may have seriously alienated the Bureau.

The Native Center's conflicts were not confined to older established social agencies; they also occurred with more recent agencies such as the Community Action Agency. Community Action was also a "have-not" agency until recently, but having gained some acceptance by the established social service community, it tended to behave similarly to it in dealing with the Native Center. Although Community Action was only one of the Center's funding sources, it insisted on having the authoritative role which the Center viewed as inappropriate and harrassing. One conflict centered around hiring and firing prerogatives. The Center and the Community Action Agency both insisted on having final authority to hire and fire Center personnel. Another conflict centered around the composition of the Center's board of directors. The Center considered its all-Native board about as representative of Alaskan poor as a board can be; the Community Action Agency, however, adjudged it unrepresentative of the poor and required the Center to have 51 percent poor instead of the usual one-third and to have actual poor instead of the usual requirement for representatives of the poor.

In this and other interagency interactions, Native Center representatives violated the prevailing style of political consensus by playing a defiant, truth-teller role. Although Community Action Agency staff frequently played a similar role, its leadership was unwilling to accept defiance from its delegate agency, expecting Center representatives to be appreciative and compliant. When Center representatives charged the Community Action Agency with imposing impossible standards regarding a low income board, and subjecting them to undue harrassment, a Community Action Agency official asked them how they could defy him when he controlled the purse strings. "We'll give it a darn good try," a Center official replied. In recounting this

incident to me, the Community Action Agency official cast out his arms in a gesture of despair saying:

> How can they be so foolish as to bite the hand that feeds them? It would be irresponsible of me to continue funding people who don't know how to get along in this world. I think I'll freeze their funds.

And forthwith he did just that.

Ironically, at the same time that the Community Action Agency was charging the Native Center with having an unrepresentative board, a Center representative was agitating the Social Service Planning Group to establish a low income board. The Social Service group came into being, in part, to ward off the move of low income groups such as the Center from gaining control of planning groups. In the 1960's there had been several unsuccessful efforts to organize a social service planning group. Interest in such a group was rejuvenated early in 1973 after the Native Center had organized a community-wide social services planning group. Administrators of established agencies then joined forces and started a competitive group which ultimately absorbed the first and became the Social Service Planning Group. Given this history, Planning Group members were not likely to support the Native Center representative's proposal to establish a low income board; they were more likely to view the proposal as proof of the Center's challenge to the existing power structure in social services. Nevertheless, because it is unpopular to oppose participation by the poor, Planning Group members did not openly reject the proposal. Instead, they covertly subverted it by failing to follow through on the Group's plan for each member to bring low income persons to subsequent meetings.

Clearly, the Native Center was not behaving in conformity with the roles prescribed for it. It would not accept a role as

supplicant, appreciative of the limited jurisdiction it had gained. It challenged the existing power structure in the interagency system. And it would not accept prevailing leadership styles of pretending a harmony that did not exist.

Interagency Sanctioning System

The Native Center is the only Anchorage agency that addresses certain critical needs of urban Natives. Its services include airport assistance, transportation, and recreation; it offers the only all-Native pool of employees for employers interested in increasing their proportions of Native employees. Yet, enormous sanctions were applied against the Center for failing to become properly socialized to the interagency system. While it is difficult to prove that a particular outcome is due to a specific sanction, the combined effects of agency responses to the Center in 1973 were to threaten its very survival.

The most potent sanction, of course, is defunding. After freezing, then restoring, then threatening defunding for Fiscal Year 1973, the Community Action Agency finally gave the Native Center reduced funding, which eliminated the Center's social service program. The Center's social service staff had been most active agitators in interagency affairs.

The Native Center also lost its Bureau of Indian Affairs contract for providing transportation services, and according to a letter the Center received from the Bureau in July 1973, its application for contracts to operate Bureau employment assistance and general relief programs would not be granted. After explaining that the Bureau contracts office was understaffed and unable to process contracts, the letter states:

> . . . you must certainly be aware of the nature and volume of work generated by the contract process . . . in your interests.

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> and ours, we have no wish to initiate an enterprise destined to failure.[37]

Further, all 17 proposals for services submitted by the Center to funding agencies were rejected.[38] Speculating about the reasons for the uniform rejections, a Center official said:

> I think our troubles began after our regional corporation filed a legal suit against the Department of the Interior.

Defunding and rejection of proposals are not the only sanctions that were applied against the Native Center. A campaign of gossip to discredit the Center was widespread within social service circles. Although charges against the Center were not different from events that are common in all agencies, they were presented as uncontroverted evidence of the Center's incompetence. When asked about the Center, most administrators and staff rejoined with accusations against it. Said one administrator:

> They're sick, they're devious. It's because they are so insecure. They're not trained, you know, and that makes them supersensitive and defensive.

Lack of training and incompetence were common charges against the Center staff, yet the majority of people implementing social services in Anchorage are not trained social workers. Anchorage social agencies seem to have little trouble accepting untrained personnel in their own agencies, and incompetence has not become a recognized issue in those agencies. Another charge against the Center focused on a conflict between Center

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[37] Letter from BIA Juneau Area Office to Anchorage Urban Native Center, July 6, 1973.

[38] Later the Center received funding support from newly available federal funds for Indian services in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

administrators and a staff member. This conflict was a major topic of conversation in social service circles and was treated as a unique phenomenon. But I encountered few agencies that were free of internal conflict.

This discrediting tactic against the Native Center proved very effective. Few agencies referred clients to the Center. When asked about their reasons for failing to refer there, respondents invoked the standard criticism of incompetence and lack of training (few had ever visited the Center). In effect, then, a boycott was imposed against the Center, weakening its potential for attracting new funds and contracts.

The sanctioning system in Anchorage social services operates both formally and informally, and the two modes are closely intertwined and complementary. The funding and contractor agencies formally impaired the Center's functioning by withdrawing or refusing funds; the informal interagency system further undermined the Center by a discrediting tactic that stigmatized the Center and excluded it from the interagency referral system.

In short, the Anchorage interagency planning groups are involved in a very active process of regulating behavior of member agencies. This regulation serves to protect the interests of established agencies in the community more than it promotes the express goals of planning—integration and rationalization of the social service system. Thus planning assumes the form of a ritual not because bureaucrats have a special inclination for ceremonials but because bureaucrats' interests in protecting their domains and the interagency status quo overshadows their interest in advancing planning goals.[39]

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[39]In a discussion of the ineffectiveness of planning for poverty, Warren points out that while planning gives the aura of massive change efforts, it serves to protect the organizational status quo. Roland Warren, "Comprehensive Planning, and Coordination: Some Functional Aspects," *Social Problems* vol. 20, no. 3 (Winter 1973), p. 361.

CHAPTER 4
CONCLUSIONS

I mentioned earlier that about one-third of the clients in my sample found their experiences with social agencies beneficial. Those clients usually had a short-term need for a single service, alternative resources to supplement agency services, and special attributes that attracted special attention from social workers. Another third of the client sample could not be clearly categorized in terms of agency outcomes. The rest of the clients, usually those who had the greatest dependence on and involvement with agencies, found their agency experiences destructive. Those clients faced deprivation from inadequate grants, humiliation from being hustled from agency to agency, and mortification and violation of their self-definition as social workers invaded their privacy and investigated their allegations, subjected them to culturally alien definitions, and stigmatized them as incorrigibles and criminals. In short, Native clients faced being stripped of their fundamental rights and self-definitions.

These mortifying experiences render clients exceedingly vulnerable to agencies' invidious definitions of them and propel them into some sort of defensive actions. But collective defenses are not readily available because clients are generally isolated from one another. Consequently, they must find individual defenses to protect themselves from the surfacing of their "badness." These defenses often assume psychologically and socially deviant forms. Although these deviant adaptations

by clients cannot be attributed solely to their experiences with agencies, agencies make a substantial contribution to them.

The most extreme cases of deviant adaptation are the successful suicides who obviously do not appear in the sample. Next are those who attempt suicide, such as Anna Marie and Tatiana. At least 12 percent of clients I sampled had attempted suicide. Alcoholism and associated problems of family abuse and neglect are the most widespread adaptations in the sample. Another adaptation which may or may not be associated with alcoholism, labelled by my research assistant Jane Reed as "the living dead," appears to be growing in importance. This adaptation results from experiences so profoundly painful that affected individuals shut out virtually all memories and do not allow themselves to think of the future. Viewing their emptiness was an awesome experience. The only flicker of contact with reality and with their futures that seeps through is plans to "keep moving." Persons with this adaptation can conceive of no solutions to their problems but to move from city to village, from state to state, endlessly roaming because they have no anchors, no sites in life.

Indeed, that agencies are organized in ways that promote and perpetuate such adaptations is a frightful situation. It flies in the face of rationality that the very organizations established to solve such problems help create them. I should like to propose one reform to improve this situation: turn social services for Natives over to Natives. Clearly, solutions to the pervasive problems of bureaucracy require more far-reaching reforms than this; they require radical change in the organization of society. Short of that, a first step than can be taken is a redistribution of social service resources to groups that have the potential for and likelihood of being more responsive and sensitive to Native clienteles. Since the interests of white, middle class bureaucrats and professionals are, in part, responsible for social services being organized in ways that undermine

Native clients, then it makes sense to change the class and ethnic composition of those who run social services for Natives.

I do not mean by this to suggest the tried and tired proposition of "maximum feasible participation." The era of the 1960's has repeatedly demonstrated the hollowness of this approach: it served essentially as a facade to create the image of minority control of social services while it perpetuated the status quo. This is not to say that the "maximum feasible participation" policy did not have some positive effects. Certainly it developed aspirations for autonomy in the minds and hearts of the dispossessed. But it did not result in significantly redistributing social service resources. It is such a redistribution that I am proposing, not that Natives sit on advisory boards to advise white bureaucrats and professionals, not that Natives be occasionally hired in professional and paraprofessional roles, but that Native organizations be given the financial and other support resources necessary to determine policies and programs and to operate social services for Natives.

Three qualifications of this proposal are in order. First, one may question the wisdom of a recommendation to solve agency-created problems for only the Native segment of the client population. But organizational means already exist for providing social services to Natives: the Native regional organizations. Such organizational means also exist for other minority group clientele and for specialized agency clienteles such as welfare clients. But none exists for the social agency client population in general. Even if it did, at this point in time, the unique problems and needs of Natives could be understood and treated better by Natives than by any other group.

The second qualification to the proposal has to do with the way social service resources should be transferred to Native organizations. As the Urban Native Center's relationship with the larger social service community showed, services can be

turned over to a Native organization in a way that subverts them. The Native Center's contracts and grants were contingent on the Center meeting the contracts and granting agencies' expectations to be subservient. Moreover, the contracts awarded the Native Center did not include the kinds of supports necessary for success—technical assistance, overhead and administrative costs, and consideration of Native organizations' readiness and capability to assume the responsibility.

A successful redistribution of social service resources to Native organizations, then, would require first organizing the redistribution in a way that will prevent competitor agencies from undermining it. One way, for example, would be a direct grant from Washington rather than funneling funds through state or local agency offices, such as the local BIA office, which may perceive a threat from the Native-run agency. Funds could be distributed as block grants for comprehensive social services to Natives. And, clearly, funds for technical assistance should be available when Natives request it.

A second condition for successful redistribution of social service resources to Native organizations involves taking into account the Native organizations' readiness and capability for managing the resource. At the present time, Native organizations' energies are consumed with political, legal, and economic enterprises associated with consolidating gains won in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. They must establish themselves as profit making corporations, organize village corporations, fight legal battles when their claims are contested or subverted, and so forth. They may lack interest and readiness to assume the enormous responsibility for managing social services for Natives at this point in time, although Native leaders indicate to me an ultimate interest in assuming this responsibility. Further, they may lack skilled personnel. It is difficult enough even finding trained Natives to fill all the managerial, professional, and technical positions they now require.

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A third qualification in the proposal to redistribute social service resources to Native organizations is a caution that this is not a panacea. Native-run bureaucracies are likely to demonstrate some of the same tendencies as white-run bureaucracies, such as organizational and professional self-interest dominating over the needs of clients. But Native organizations are far more likely than white-run bureaucracies to be responsive to Native constituencies. Natives very positions as leaders in Native organizations depend on support from their ethnic constituency. Moreover, as leaders and members of an oppressed group, they are likely to be more sensitive and responsive than non-Natives to the needs of their people.

Finally, Native-run organizations also have the potential for solving some of the very problems that bring Natives into client status in the first place. The problems associated with Natives' status as dispossessed people living on the fringes of society can only be ameliorated by increasing Natives' control over some of the resources of the society. Such control has the potential for developing pride and self-confidence and also for furnishing models of success to Native youth whose educational, social, and psychological problems can be traced, in part, to the dearth of Native role models in their experience.

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APPENDIX

Study Methods

Anchorage is a small urban center (borough population is 143,000)* but has over 100 social service agencies. To make my study manageable I had to narrow the field of agencies. I arbitrarily eliminated services for physical health, corrections, education, and children and youth (except Aid to Families with Dependent Children and child protection). I focused on agencies providing the following types of services: mental health, financial assistance, manpower and training, housing, and social services (in its narrow concept of services traditionally provided by social workers). I identified 25 agencies in these categories whose clientele includes at least 15 percent Natives (see table on pp. 6 and 7). These composed the agency sample plus two others—Manpower Center because its small proportion of Native applicants (8 percent) represents a large number of individuals (over 1,000) and Anchorage Borough Health Department (4 percent Native clients) because of its expanding role in social service planning. In addition to individual agencies, I studied four community planning groups in which the sample agencies are involved. The processes I observed in this sample of agencies and planning groups appear to be characteristic of the total Anchorage social service field.

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*Paul Carr, Greater Anchorage Area Borough Planning Department, personal communication, July 1973.

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I sought answers to my research questions in observations at planning meetings and in interviews with agency administrators, staff, and Native clients. Clients names were furnished by the agencies after clients agreed to participate in the study. This sample appears to be biased in favor of clients with favorable outcomes. While I had the impression that several social workers deliberately selected clients with unfavorable agency outcomes in the hopes that my telling their stories would act as a pressure for changing their agencies, I also had the impression that the majority of social workers selected clients whose stories would reflect favorably on the agencies. However, this bias proved useful in lending credence to my finding that a large proportion of Native clients have destructive experiences with agencies.

During 1973, I interviewed 33 administrators and 46 social workers. I use the term "social worker" to mean those who have face to face contact with clients in the implementation of social services. The social worker sample includes 21 persons who bear the title "social worker," 2 welfare eligibility workers, 2 manpower recruitment officers, and 21 counselors. I concentrated on interviews with administrators and staff in agencies having the most significant impact on Anchorage Natives—public welfare, Bureau of Indian Affairs Social Services and Employment Assistance branches, Indian Health Service Psychiatric and Social Service departments, Alaska Psychiatric Institute, Work Incentive Program, and Greater Anchorage Area Community Action Agency. I and my research assistants also interviewed 50 Native clients of the sample agencies, each of whom generally had experience with several or many agencies in the sample. We used focused interviews, usually asking a standard set of questions but varying the order of the questions and the emphases of interviews in line with special interests, experiences, and expertise of informants.

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